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Spitting Cherry Pits

Alyssa Burdett

alyssa.burdett14@gmail.com

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Alyssa Burdett
Logan, UT
November 28, 2017

Spitting Cherry Pits Family Custom

Informant:

My informant's name is Mrs. B. She was raised in Springville, UT and currently resides in Gilbert, AZ. She is a stay-at-home mother, but has attended both SUSC (aka SUU) and BYU in the past. Some of her favorite hobbies include sewing, learning new cooking techniques, and going on "foodie adventures."

Context:

We were emailing back and forth. My informant was sitting at her desk working on some projects for her church when she got my email and I was sitting in my room working on various homework assignments. She admitted to me that she wished she were a better writer. I thought her writing was great, but she might have written this with a slight insecurity. This story is about a family custom that isn't generally spoken about, but it's certainly been passed down in the family. The first half refers to her and her children whereas the second half gives some background about her childhood and how the tradition started in the first place. When she writes that she was best at shooting the pit, she's not lying. I was probably the worst, sometimes my pits wouldn't even make it into the flower bed where we were shooting. They would end up on the cement right in front of my feet while I'd be sitting ashamedly, drool dribbling down my chin. If inclined to tell this story, there isn't a particular situation it wouldn't be shared in. Likely, it would be shared if it was a logical story to be sharing given the topic.

Text:

During the summer, we would eat our dinner, then eat a treat out on the front porch. It was South facing and shady, whereas the backyard was sunny and hot. Sometimes we would take a bowl of ice cream out on the porch. But when they were in season, we would take a big bowl of fresh cherries out. The porch was set back in. We could watch whatever activity there was happening on the street, but the tree and bushes somewhat hid us from being easily seen. They were a good cover for our Hillbilly game. One at a time we would eat the flesh off the cherry, leaving the pit in our mouth. By filling our cheeks with air and forming an "O" shape with our mouths we could shoot the pit through our lips and out into the garden area. It became a contest to see who could shoot the pit the farthest. Sometimes we would pick a target and see who could

come closest to hitting it. If memory serves me right, no one was better at shooting the pit than me, but I could be wrong on that.

In the summer, when I was growing up, it was very common for us to just go outside in the evenings to sit on the lawn. If there were any neighbors out sitting on their lawn, my parents would take their chairs over and sit with them and chat. The kids would run around, ride their bikes, roller skate, play night games, etc. So sitting out front in the evenings is something we definitely did when I was growing up. Also, back then, our watermelons always came with seeds, now days you have an option of buying seedless. I suppose it was no coincidence that we ate watermelon outside too, mom probably wanted to avoid the mess in the house. I felt the same way, some foods are just better eaten outside. Anyway, when we had the watermelon we would take a bite and just spit the seeds out. No one really just sat and picked them out. And remember grandpa had cherry trees in his front yard. We could pick them fresh from the tree and eat them right there. No one wants to touch the pit, it's simply cleaner to just spit seeds out. You look like a hillbilly doing it, but it's what makes the most sense. Another thing I remember doing was just laying on my side on the grass, elbow bent and head in my hand. Dad and I would carefully pull blades of grass to expose the white "milky" part. We'd stick the blade of grass in our mouth and chew on that milky part. Definitely another hillbilly thing to do. But it's one of my fondest memories.

Texture:

She wrote this with a tone of nostalgia, remembering past days and front porch sitting. She also wrote this with a hint of insecurity, admitting to me that she wished she were a better writer. Having grown up in Springville, she enjoys small town living and the "hillbilly" things her family did, so she writes of them fondly.

Alyssa Burdett
Utah State University

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